



## Juried Competitions

Juried competition projects are eligible for funding, but are often difficult to support mainly because artistic merit is hard to establish. Unlike other exhibition projects, the artists whose work will be shown in a competition have typically not been selected by the application deadline. In addition, the basic design of most juried competitions – an open call from which a juror chooses the exhibiting artists – inherently limits the potential quality and conceptual cohesiveness of the presentation to the field of artists who apply.

As a result, applicants should observe the following when proposing a juried competition project:

- Juried competitions must have had at least a two-year programming history to be considered. This is essential because, without images of the work to be included in the proposed project, the primary evidence of artistic merit will be examples from past competitions. Other supporting material from a previous competition – brochures, names and qualifications of jurors, educational programs, etc. – can also be helpful to panelists in understanding the likely quality of the proposed project. The information you provide should not be all retrospective. The proposal will be more compelling with details you can offer about your plans for the upcoming competition, such as:
  - Juror name and qualifications. This information can help address the artistic merit question as well. A good juror can both attract better artists and shape a more interesting exhibition, though he or she can only work with what comes in.
  - Names and affiliations/expertise of members of the planning or advisory committee. Who's involved says a good deal about how the competition is viewed in the community, artistically, educationally, and otherwise.
  - Timetable and commitments of key people/partners. A clear and achievable timeline lends credibility to a proposal as do letters of support/commitment from the people or institutions you are counting on to make the event happen.
- Consider what makes the competition different from similar events. Is it the educational programming you do? Is there a special approach (theme, target artist group, location, etc.) to the competition that will attract interesting artists and stimulate public engagement? All applicants should be looking for ways to distinguish their proposals from the pack, but it's especially important for juried competition projects, which start at something of a disadvantage.
- Audience. This is often tricky to determine because of the lack of information about the artists who will be included in the exhibition. If there is a theme for the competition – art that moves, environmentally based work – or a target group of eligible artists – Latino artists, sculptors, N.C. artists – then you may be able to generate some preliminary ideas about groups that may be interested. Show how you've reached out to community organizations to tell them about and involve them in the project and brainstorm about programming ideas that may capitalize on the theme or focus of the exhibition to make a more compelling grant presentation.